



## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Lower Peninsula Bait and Feed Ban**

#### **November 2008**

#### **What is the deer bait and feed ban?**

Because of the confirmation of a deer with chronic wasting disease in a privately owned deer in Kent County, it is no longer legal to bait or feed deer or elk in the Lower Peninsula. The ban applies equally to feeding for recreational viewing as well as hunting.

#### **What is considered bait?**

According to state law, "bait" for deer is "a substance composed of grains, minerals, salt, fruit, vegetables, hay or any other food material, whether natural or manufactured, which may lure, entice or attract deer."

#### **Is this ban necessary?**

Yes. Biologists have long known that disease is easily spread among animals that are drawn into close physical proximity by feed. Although the exact means of transmission of chronic wasting disease is not known, most scientists believe any exchange of bodily fluids -- saliva, urine, feces -- facilitates transmission. A healthy white-tailed deer population in Michigan is important for the following reasons:

- Chronic wasting disease can spread through the deer herd.
- Without appropriate management within the current CWD surveillance zone, the disease may spread to other areas of the state.
- All deer infected with CWD die from the disease.
- White-tailed deer are native to Michigan and it is important to preserve our native wildlife.
- Any regional threat to a healthy deer population is a statewide concern.
- A healthy deer herd is important for hunting traditions. Michigan has more than 725,000 deer hunters who have harvested an average of 450,000 deer annually during the past decade. Deer hunting contributes more than 10 million days of recreation every year.
- Deer hunting annually generates more than \$500 million dollars impact to the state's economy. A healthy deer herd is critical to the state's economy.

#### **Isn't restricting baiting in the entire Lower Peninsula too extreme?**

No. The state of Michigan adopted a policy, which was developed by the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture, six years ago designed to help stop the spread of chronic wasting disease in the event it was detected in a deer or elk within the state or within 50 miles of the state's border. The policy calls for the immediate end to baiting and feeding within the entire peninsula in which the infected animal was detected.

#### **How does this ban affect bear baiting?**

Bear hunters may use fish or fish products, meat or meat products or bakery products to bait bears. However, no substance defined by law (see question above "what is considered bait") as bait for deer may be used in the Lower Peninsula.

**How long will the ban be in effect?**

Although the ban was originally ordered for a six-month period, the Natural Resources Commission voted in October to extend it. The ban is in place until the NRC decides to lift it.

**Can I still feed turkeys?**

It is legal to feed turkeys; however, people feeding turkeys must make every effort to prevent deer from gaining access to the site. Elevated feeding platforms, for instance, would not be legal if spilled grain from the platform was accessible to deer.

**How about hunting over food plots or agricultural fields?**

It is legal to hunt over standing crops or food plots.

**May I use attractant scents?**

Yes. Scent products are not considered bait unless they are designed for deer to ingest or lick, in which case they would be illegal.

**I already have my bait, what do I do now?**

We expect landowners to make every attempt to make any bait inaccessible to deer, either by selling it to someone who can use it legally (e.g., livestock producer), fencing it, covering it or disposing of it in an approved landfill.

**What if I discover someone else baiting?**

Call our RAP (Report All Poaching) Line at 1-800-292-7800 and report any illegal activity.

**Is it illegal to sell bait?**

No. The DNR does not regulate the selling of agricultural products.

**What's the fine if I'm caught baiting?**

The fine for illegal baiting is anywhere from \$50 to \$500 and up to 90 days in jail.